

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BEIRUT 05831 231550Z
ACTION CU-05

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5897

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5831

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR LE US
SUBJ: IV GRANT FOR WALID JUMBLATT

REF: (A) BEIRUT 2957, (B) STATE 148792

1. WE BELIEVE THAT AN IV GRANT FOR WALID JUMBLATT TO VISIT THE U.S. SHOULD BE PRIORITY ITEM IN OUR CU PROGRAM FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

A. SINCE THE ASSASSINATION OF HIS FATHER IN MARCH, 1977, WALID HAS EMERGED AS THE KEY LEADER IN LEBANON'S POLITICALLY IMPORTANT DRUZE COMMUNITY;

B. WALID HAS INHERITED THE LEADERSHIP OF HIS FATHER'S POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY (PSP) AND IS AN INFLUENTIAL POLITICAL FIGURE IN THE LEBANESE LEFT;

C. WALID IS A YOUNG MAN (29) WHOSE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY HAS NOT YET JELLED. HE IS OPEN TO NEW IDEAS AND INFLUENCES.

D. WALID IS A GRADUATE OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT (AUB) BUT HAS NEVER VISITED THE U.S. AND WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO DO SO. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE HAS VISITED THE SOVIET UNION THREE TIMES AND IS ASSIDUOUSLY COURTED BY THE COMMUNISTS.

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2. ALTHOUGH WALID IS THE SCION OF ONE OF LEBANON'S PRINCIPAL FEUDAL FAMILIES, HE APPEARS BE GENUINELY SHORT OF FUNDS AND IS IN ANY CASE UNLIKELY TO MAKE A TRIP TO THE U.S. UNLESS HE IS OFFICIALLY INVITED BY THE USG. ALTHOUGH SUCH AN INVITATION MAY, AS SUGGESTED REF B, RAISE SOME QUESTIONS HERE FROM THE LEADERS OF LEBANON'S MANY OTHER POLITICAL FACTIONS, WE BELIEVE THIS POTENTIAL

PROBLEM IS MANAGEABLE AND IS OUTWEIGHED BY THE IMPORTANCE
OF HAVING WALID JUMBLATT VISIT THE UNITED STATE UNDER
U.S. AUSPICES.

3. GIVEN THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION IN LEBANON,
IT IS UNLIKELY THAT WALID WOULD BE ABLE TO SPEND MORE
THAN TWO-THREE WEEKS AWAY FROM BEIRUT. FOREMOST ON
HIS MIND DURING HIS VISIT WOULD BE CALLS ON SENIOR U.S.
OFFICIALS AND MEETINGS WITH DRUZE COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.
IT WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO MEET WITH U.S. SENATE
AND HOUSE MEMBERS INTERESTED IN MID EAST AFFAIRS AND TO
VISIT UNIVERSITIES WHICH EMPHASIZE MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE ADVISE ASAP IF DEPT
CONCURS IN AND CAN FUND THIS IV SO THAT WE CAN APPROACH
WALID JUMBLATT WITH AN INVITATION.

PARKER

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NNN

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